

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3355

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0319

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF AO

SUBJECT: REFUGEE PROGRAM FOR ANGOLA

REF: STATE 065942

1. THERE FOLLOWS ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN REFTTEL.

A. THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA (TGA) HAS STILL NOT MADE A FORMAL REQUEST TO THE WFP FOR FOOD. AN FAO/WFP TEAM IS TO COME TO ANGOLA IN APRIL TO SURVEY THE SITUATION AND THE MINISTER OF HEALTH PLANS TO WAIT UNTIL THEN BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION.

B. A TEAM FROM THE UNHCR CENTRAL AFRICAN OFFICE ARRIVED IN LUANDA MARCH 24 AND ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 25 THE APPROVAL OF 1,000,000 DOLLARS FOR USE IN ANGOLA. THE UNHCR WILL ALSO OPEN AN OFFICE IN ANGOLA.

C. TWO OFFICIALS OF CARITAS CALLED ON THE MINISTER OF HEALTH DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 17 AND ASKED IF THEY COULD HELP. WHEN THE MINISTER AGREED, THEY SAID THEY WOULD TRY AND GET SOMETHING UNDERWAY NEXT MONTH. THE MINISTER DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO AND HE IS SCEPTICAL THAT ANYTHING WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO HIM, IT IS SHOT THROUGH WITH MPLA SYMPATHIZERS.

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2. I TALKED WITH THE MINISTER OF HEALTH ON MARCH 25 ABOUT THE UNHCR CONTRIBUTION. ABRIGADA KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT IT. HE IS MORE CONCERNED AT THE MOMENT WITH GETTING THINGS UNDERWAY WITH THE MONEY HE HAS RECEIVED FROM THE TGA. HE SAID HE DEFINITELY HAS THE 100,000 CONTOS (ABOUT FOUR MILLION DOLLARS) AND WANT TO BUY SOME FOOD WITH IT WITHIN A WEEK. HE HAS TALKED TO LARGE FOOD RETAILERS, WHO HAVE ASSURED HIM THAT STAPLES ARE AVAILABLE. ABRIGADA PLANS TO PUT OUT REQUESTS FOR BIDS AFTER EASTER.

3. ABRIGADA HAS CALCULATED THAT HE WILL NEED TO BUY FOOD FOR SIX MONTHS FOR 650,000 PEOPLE, OR 130,000 FAMILIES. HE TOLD ME HE EXPECTS TO HAVE 650,000 REFUGEES BACK IN ANGOLA BY THE END OF APRIL, AN ESTIMATE I CANNOT BELIEVE. HIS PLAN CALLS FOR THE FOLLOWING SIX MONTHS SUPPLIES:

MANDIOCA MEAL 106,300 TONS

PEANUTS 15,000 TONS

PALM OIL 7,600 TONS

DRY BEANS 22,800 TONS

SUGAR 7,592 TONS

RICE 15,200 TONS

BANANAS 28,000 TONS

FOR HIS FIRST BID REQUEST NEXT WEEK HE WILL ASK FOR THE FOLLOWING:

MANDIOCA 200 TONS

BEANS 20 TONS

RICE 20 TONS

AS WELL AS PEANUTS, PALM OIL, BANANAS, DRIED FISH AND
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FRESH MEAT. THE MINISTER PLANS TO ASK FOR BIDS EVERY
WEEK.

4. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH MET ON MARCH 23 WITH THE GOVERNORS OF THE NINE DISTRICTS IN AFFECTED AREAS (INCLUDING CABINDA) TO ENLIST THEIR HELP IN ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM AND IN FINDING SUITABLE SHELTERS TO STORE FOOD. THE GOVERNORS WILL SUPERVISE THE PROGRAM IN THEIR DISTRICTS, ASSISTED BY ADMINISTRATORS

AND CHEFES DO POSTO, WHO ARE THE PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS IN VILLAGES.
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID WILL BE THE POLITICAL COMMISSARS
OF THE THREE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

5. I ASKED ABRIGADA WHETHER THE MPLA MIGHT BLOCK BOTH THE
DOMESTIC PROGRAM AND THE ASSISTANCE COMING IN FROM ABROAD.
HE SAID THIS NOT POSSIBLE; THE REFUGEE PROGRAM IS IN
THE ALVOR AGREEMENT AND THERE IS NO WAY THE ASSISTANCE CAN
BE THWARTED. AS FOR THE REFUGEE COMMISSION, HE SAID HE HAS
MET WITH THE GROUP ON A FEW OCCASIONS AND BELIEVES THAT
IF MPLA DOES TRY TO BLOCK ACTION HE IS CERTAIN THEY WILL
GET NO SUPPORT FROM THE OTHER MEMBERS.

6. NOW THAT HE HAS 100,000 CONTOS, ONE MILLION DOLLARS
FROM UNHCR AND THE POSSIBILITY OF WFP AND CARITAS
COMMODITIES, ABRIGADA IS IN GOOD SHAPE FOR THE IMMEDIATE
FUTURE. MUCH DEPENDS ON THE RATE OF FLOW OF REFUGEES.
HE SAYS HE WILL NEED 150,000,000 DOLLARS TO DO THE ENTIRE
JOB, BUT THIS IS AN ESTIMATE BASED ON 1,500,000 RETURNEES
OVER A THREE YEAR PERIOD, A WILDLY UNREALISTIC PROJECTION.
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